

July 31, 2017

## CELEBRATING BREASTFEEDING

*Free Community Program: August 18*



**Contact:**

Renay Rouse [Renay.Rouse@FLHealth.gov](mailto:Renay.Rouse@FLHealth.gov) 772-631-6008

(Martin County, FL) — The Florida Department of Health in Martin County is celebrating National Breastfeeding Month this August.

The public is invited to “Sustaining Breastfeeding Together”, a free community education program on Friday, August 18, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Children’s Services Council, 101 SE Central Parkway, Stuart.

The program, facilitated by WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Nutrition Services will feature guest speakers and community resource information. Martin Health System and the Martin County Healthy Start Coalition will provide refreshments and door prizes. For more information or to register for the program, contact Claudia Worley at 772-221-4000 ext. 2136.

The department is working to promote breastfeeding as a vital health activity, and encourages breastfeeding-friendly hospitals, child care facilities, work places and communities.

How to feed a new baby is one of the first important decisions a family must make.

Research shows:

- Breastfed infants have a reduced risk of infections, asthma, obesity and SIDS compared with formula-fed infants.
- Mothers who breastfeed have a reduced risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer and postpartum depression compared to mothers who don't breastfeed.

To reach the goal of exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months mothers need supportive work policies, infant and child-care at or near the workplace and private facilities for expressing and storing breastmilk. It takes time and practice to learn how to breastfeed, both for mother and baby, and to establish a good milk supply.

Healthiest Weight Florida within the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention, in partnership with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Healthy Start, and the Florida Child Care Food Program, has a variety of tools available for mothers and families, as well as employers, childcare facilities, and hospitals and health care professionals. Visit <http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com/activities/breastfeeding.html> for more information.

As part of the department’s Healthiest Weight Florida initiative, the Baby Steps to Baby Friendly project focuses on increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration among Florida women. Baby

Steps to Baby Friendly supports hospitals wishing to improve and enhance maternity care practices related to breastfeeding, including achieving the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, developed by the World Health Organization.

The department is currently partnered with 57 hospitals across the state, and 13 hospitals have already earned their Baby Friendly designation, with more expected this year. To learn more about Baby Steps to Baby Friendly, visit <http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com/activities/baby-steps.html>

Locally, WIC offers resources and staff to help breastfeeding mothers, including an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant and Peer Counselors provide mother-mother breastfeeding education and support to pregnant and breastfeeding moms.

For more information about the local Florida WIC program call 772-221-4000 or visit [www.FloridaWIC.org](http://www.FloridaWIC.org). To learn more about National Breastfeeding Month and the benefits of breastfeeding visit [www.usbreastfeeding.org](http://www.usbreastfeeding.org), [www.lli.org](http://www.lli.org) or [www.flbreastfeeding.org](http://www.flbreastfeeding.org).

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](http://www.nacac.org), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/HealthyFla) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.MartinCountyHealth.com](http://www.MartinCountyHealth.com)

###